



# We can start Handle With Care to support kids exposed to trauma!



The “Handle With Care” program enables police to notify schools if they encounter a child at a traumatic scene, so schools and mental healthcare leaders can provide trauma-sensitive support right away.



## ✓ The Problem: Childhood Trauma

- Childhood trauma, or Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), occurs when kids experience stressful events (such as witnessing domestic violence).
- 60% of U.S. children have been exposed to violence, crime, or abuse.
- These kids still have to go to class, carrying a burden of stress/trauma that can interfere with their behavior/grades in schools that aren’t even aware there’s an issue.

## ✓ A Solution: Handle With Care



**1. Police encounter kids at scene, send heads-up to schools.**

Police are trained to send a confidential notification (by email, text, or dispatch) to the school or childcare agency with: the child’s name, age, and school, and a message to “Handle With Care.” Nothing about the traumatic incident is shared with the school.



**2. Schools prep trauma-sensitive support for kids.**

A school will create a process to triage “Handle With Care” notifications. The process will involve notifying the appropriate teacher or counselor to observe the student’s behavior/learning and be prepared to provide trauma-sensitive support.



**3. Mental health providers partner for on-site therapy.**

When school interventions are not sufficient, mental healthcare professionals (trained in Trauma Focused Cognitive Behavior therapy), partner to provide therapy on site at school at a designated time (with consent from parents/guardians).

*A person from each of the school, police, and mental healthcare disciplines is expected to participate in regular Handle With Care meetings to assess academic achievements, trancies, disciplinary reports, and treatment outcomes.*

## ✓ How Do We Start Handle With Care?

We are using the free “Handle With Care Action Pack” from **Salud America!**, a health equity research and communications program at UT Health San Antonio.

They will guide us as we unite police, schools, mental healthcare, and other stakeholders to create our own Handle With Care program. We will use examples from the West Virginia Center for Children’s Justice, which launched Handle With Care in 2013. Since then, 65 cities have since started their own such program. We can be next!



See how San Antonio, Texas started its Handle With Care program!

<https://salud.to/sapdhwc>